

The ORGANIZER



Celebrate International Worker's Day!

From how little it's observed in the U.S., International Workers' Day would appear to be an unwelcome immigrant here. But like the economic and political conditions that have driven many of our neighbors and coworkers to the U.S. from where they were born, Mayday has its origins in this country.

On May 1, 1886, hundreds of thousands of mostly immigrant workers flooded the streets of Chicago and other U.S. cities, on strike for an eight-hour day with no reduction in their pay. At the time, ten, twelve, even fourteen hours made up a normal workday.

Three days later, at a rally protesting the shooting deaths of strikers at Chicago's McCormick Reaper plant, an unknown person threw a dynamite bomb as the rally ended, killing a policeman. Police rioted, killing each other in the confusion, and eight labor organizers from the anarchist International Working People's Association were convicted of the killings on no evidence.

"These men have been selected, picked out by the grand jury and indicted because they are the leaders," the prosecutor told the jury. "They are no more guilty than the thousands who follow them.... Convict these men, make examples of them... and you save our institutions, our society."

"I have seen men hanged for the truth in this very city," Al Klemensic told the I.W.W.'s founding convention in 1905. "Industrial unionism at that time had begun to shake capitalism to its very foundations, and the judges and plutocrats in this country decided to hang the men with the hope of hanging industrial unionism at the same time."

But it survives in the I.W.W., and we remember their sacrifice every Mayday.

-FW Rosenquist



AMFA President Ted Ludwig addresses strikers at a rally

We Learn As We Fight:

Lessons From The AMFA Strike

On April 1st we held a forum on "Lessons from the Northwest Airlines Strike" at Macalester College in St. Paul. Around 100 strikers, strikers' families, and supporters were present. The evening had some lively speakers in Ted Ludwig, President of AMFA Local 33; Professor Peter Rachleff, labor historian and activist; Karen Schultz, PFAA Communications solidarity striker; and fellow wob Jeff Pilacinski who closed the night off with the stirring statements "An injury to one is an injury to all," and "direct action gets satisfaction."

A major theme that ran through the night was the importance of acting in solidarity with fellow workers, not just at a job site but throughout the world. Solidarity should start before a strike is even called. Solidarity cannot be confined to a particular craft, but must exist across all crafts and nationalities. AMFA has learned this the hard way.

Instead of allowing the airline to take whatever they could from the workers, AMFA drew a line in the sand and asked, "Which side are you on?" If all the unions of the airlines had stood together as one big union this strike would have been won from the moment the employers ever thought to bully the workers.

-Fellow Wob Jukebox Hero

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¡HUELGA GENERAL! GENERAL STRIKE!

A quarter million immigrant workers on the streets of Chicago. A half-million in Dallas. Up to a million in L.A. Tens of thousands more in Milwaukee, Denver, Phoenix, New York City, and Atlanta. 40,000 in St. Paul.

This Spring has seen the largest demonstrations of workers in the history of the United States. Immigrant workers mainly from Mexico and across Latin America, but also from Africa, China, Korea, Eastern Europe, Ireland, and the Middle East, have risen in a tremendous show of force against the racist and anti-worker legislation being discussed in Congress.

Immigrant workers and their families rank amongst the most exploited and oppressed of our class. They already face a thousand injustices, risking life and limb to leave their native lands, (often torn apart by U.S.- sponsored war and underdevelopment) only to land in the hardest and worst-paying jobs- factories, sweat shops, child care, kitchens, meat packing, janitorial, construction . . . But ENOUGH IS ENOUGH!

Immigrant workers have shown they will not endure these privations and then be labeled "criminal" as well. Since when is it a crime to work for a living? Now has come the unprecedented call for a General Strike (or Huelga General) on Primero de Mayo, May First, Mayday, the International Workers' Day. NO WORK! NO SCHOOL! NO SHOPPING!

The Industrial Workers of the World embraces this call. We pledge to do all that we can to strengthen and support the May 1st Day of Action. A "General Strike" or "Mass Strike" means a protest across the entire working-class, no matter the industry or union. It is an act of defiance that immediately threatens the bosses' grip on society.

In France workers and students recently used Mass Strikes to defeat a new law that discriminated against young workers. In Nepal, the people have used a General Strike to challenge the Monarchy. But in the U.S., with an official labor movement that has been dominated by racism, idiotic patriotism, and pro-capitalist bureaucracy, the concept of a General Strike is unheard of. It should be no surprise that the traditional unions, the church hierarchy, and the Democratic Party politicians are now trying to stop the May 1st action. A General Strike shows that it is the workers who have the power and not them!

We ALL owe a great deal of gratitude to our immigrant sisters and brothers for placing our most powerful weapon back on the agenda.

—FW Knutson

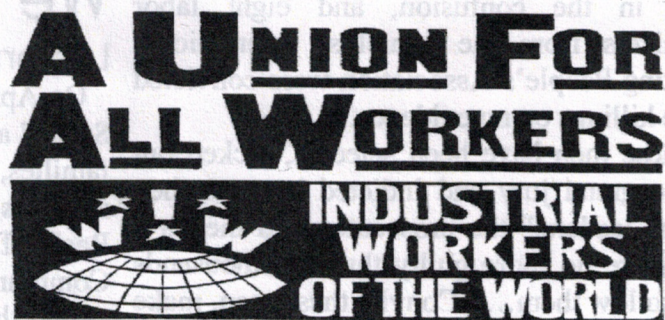
Organizing Summit

On March 10th-12th, members of the Twin Cities IWW branch participated in an organizing summit in Austin, TX. Workers from across the country met to develop and refine strategies for empowering the working class. The discussions touched a wide variety of topics from dual card unionism to the revolutionary potential of worker cooperatives.

Our fellow Wobblies inspired us with all the tremendous organizing they are doing, and they, in turn, were eager to hear about the exciting growth of the Twin Cities branch.

This summit was a great example of what makes the IWW a powerful working-class organization. Our activities are 100% democratic and member-driven. We do not need professional organizers because we are all organizers. We educate our fellow workers one by one, and together we can take action in direct and creative ways. As workers, we already run our workplaces—all we have to do is organize ourselves!

—FW Schrader



Upcoming Events...

May 1st: Mayday/National Day of Action For Immigrants' Rights. Rally at Powderhorn Park, 3-8pm.

May 2nd: General Membership Branch Meeting, 7pm, Wolves Den Coffee House, 1201A Franklin Ave. E.

May 7th: Mayday Parade through South Minneapolis

May 17th: IWW Day of Action

May 27th: Education Committee, Seward Café, 12 noon

May 28th: Education Workers Organizing Committee, Seward Café, 11:30 AM

May 30th: IWW Radical Film Night, 7:45pm, U of MN

Every Wednesday: Wob Night, 7pm, Pizza Luce Seward

Towards One Big Union of All Working People!